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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/856,361	05/22/2001	Takehiko Kezuka	P07222US00/L	6882

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EXAMINER

GOUDREAU, GEORGE A

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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1763

DATE MAILED: 08/14/2002

4

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09-856,361

Applicant(s)

Keszuka et al

Examiner

George Goudreau

Group Art Unit

1763

— The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet beneath the correspondence address —

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, such period shall, by default, expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on (5-01 ' to 8-01 ') (i.e. - papers #1-3)
- ☐ This action is **FINAL**.
- ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, **prosecution as to the merits is closed** in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11; 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- ☒ Claim(s) 1-15 is/are pending in the application.
- Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- ☒ Claim(s) 1-10, 14-15 is/are rejected.
- ☒ Claim(s) 11-13 is/are objected to.
- ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction or election requirement

Application Papers

- ☐ The proposed drawing correction, filed on _____ is ☐ approved ☐ disapproved.
- ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are objected to by the Examiner
- ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119 (a)-(d)

- ☒ Acknowledgement is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119 (a)-(d).
- ☒ All ☐ Some* ☐ None of the:
- ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
- ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a))

*Certified copies not received: _____

Attachment(s)

- ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s), PTO-1449, Paper No(s). 3
- ☒ Notice of Reference(s) Cited, PTO-892
- ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review, PTO-948
- ☐ Interview Summary, PTO-413
- ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application, PTO-152
- ☐ Other _____

Office Action Summary

Art Unit: 1763

15. Claims 5-10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

-In claims 5-8, the term "hydrogenfluoride" should read "hydrogen fluoride".; and

-In claims 4-5, 9-10, the term "organic solvent having a hereto atom" is confusing, and should be reworded.

16. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

17. This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103© and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

Art Unit: 1763

18. Claims 1-4, 9, and 14-15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wojtczak et. al. (6,280,651).

Wojtczak et. al. disclose a process for wet etching a BPSG layer, and a thermal SiO₂ layer on a wafer using a solution which is comprised of NH₄F, a chelating agent, and ethylene glycol. The wet etching process is conducted at a temperature of between (20-60) C. The BPSG layer, and the thermal SiO₂ layers are etched at approximately the same rate. Both the BPSG layer, and the thermal SiO₂ layer are etched at a rate between (4-67) angstroms. This is discussed specifically in columns 2-4; and discussed in general in columns 1-6. Wojtczak et. al. fail, however, to specifically disclose the following aspects of applicant's claimed invention:

-the specific wet etching process parameters which are claimed by the applicant

It would have been prima facie obvious to employ any of a variety of different wet etching process parameters in the etching process taught above including those which are specifically claimed by the applicant. These are all well known variables in the wet etching art which are known to effect both the rate and quality of the wet etching process. Further, the selection of particular values for these variables would not necessitate any undo experimentation which would be indicative of a showing of unexpected results.

Alternatively, it would have been obvious to one skilled in the art to employ the specific wet etching process parameters which are claimed by the applicant in the wet etching process taught above based upon In re Aller as cited below.

Art Unit: 1763

“Where the general conditions of a claim are disclosed in the prior art, it is not inventive to discover the optimum or workable ranges by routine experimentation.” In re Aller, 220 F. 2d 454, 105 USPQ 233, 235 (CCPA).

Further, all of the specific process parameters which are claimed by the applicant are results effective variables whose values are known to effect both the rate and the quality of the wet etching process.

19. Claims 1-5, 9-10, and 14-15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bowden et. al. (5,320,709).

Bowden et. al. disclose a process for wet etching a BPSG layer , and a thermal SiO₂ layer on a wafer using a solution which is comprised of ~~4~~ % NH₄F, 96 % polyhydric alcohol, and less than 0.5 % H₂O at a temperature of 20-40 C. The etch rate of the BPSG is ~~4~~¹⁴ angstroms at 25 C. The etch rate of the thermal SiO₂ is ~~14~~⁴ angstroms at 25 C. This is discussed specifically in columns 2-4; and discussed in general in columns 1-4. This is shown specifically in figures 2-4; and shown in general in figures 1-5. Bowden et. al. fail, however, to specifically disclose the following aspects of applicant's claimed invention:

-the specific wet etching process parameters which are claimed by the applicant

It would have been prima facie obvious to employ any of a variety of different wet etching process parameters in the etching process taught above including those which are specifically claimed by the applicant. These are all well known variables in the wet etching art which are known to effect both the rate and quality of the wet etching process. Further, the selection of

Art Unit: 1763

particular values for these variables would not necessitate any undo experimentation which would be indicative of a showing of unexpected results.

Alternatively, it would have been obvious to one skilled in the art to employ the specific wet etching process parameters which are claimed by the applicant in the wet etching process taught above based upon In re Aller as cited below.

“Where the general conditions of a claim are disclosed in the prior art, it is not inventive to discover the optimum or workable ranges by routine experimentation.” In re Aller, 220 F. 2d 454, 105 USPQ 233, 235 (CCPA).

Further, all of the specific process parameters which are claimed by the applicant are results effective variables whose values are known to effect both the rate and the quality of the wet etching process.

20. Claims 11-13 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

21. Claims 6-8 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. 112, 2nd paragraph, set forth in this Office action and to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

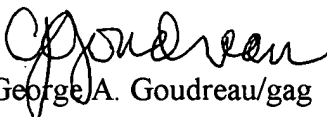
22. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Art Unit: 1763

23. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Examiner George A. Goudreau whose telephone number is (703) -308-1915. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday from 9:30 to 6:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Examiner Gregory Mills, can be reached on (703) -308-1633. The appropriate fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (703) -306-3186.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) -308-0661.


George A. Goudreau/gag

Primary Examiner

AU 1763